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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9388  
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RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 3824  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0038  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 4440  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0304  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0271  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0318  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4031  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2302  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0343  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0977  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1066  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2392  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR SCA/PPD, R, DRL, SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ICRC](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: ICRC RESUMES PRISON VISITS IN UZBEKISTAN

REF: A. TASHKENT 266

[1](#)B. TASHKENT 253

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 4.

[1](#)2. (U) On March 13 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) publicly announced that it had resumed visits to detainees in Uzbek prisons as part of a six-month trial period of renewed engagement. In the statement (e-mailed to the desk and also available at [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)), the Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Central Asia Yves Giovannoni is quoted as saying that the agreement "enables us to conduct our visits in Uzbekistan, as elsewhere in the world, in accordance with standard ICRC working procedures."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Modalities had been a key sticking point in the three years of negotiations since ICRC suspended visits in response to restrictions placed by the Government of Uzbekistan (reftels). The new agreement allows ICRC to visit all places of detention throughout Uzbekistan, which has an estimated inmate population of 48,000, and it will be able to conduct private interviews with detainees.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Action request: The resumption of ICRC prison visits is a major positive development in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, which we have consistently promoted. We strongly recommend the Department issue a statement acknowledging this development. Proposed language is as follows:

"The United States welcomes the announcement by the International Committee of the Red Cross that prison visits successfully resumed this week in Uzbekistan. Torture and abuse of prisoners were cited as areas of serious concern in the 2003 report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, who conducted a fact-finding mission in 2002 upon the invitation of the Government of Uzbekistan, as well as in

our 2007 Human Rights Report on Uzbekistan. ICRC visits can be an effective measure to prevent abuse. We welcome this voluntary step as well as the recent release of political prisoners, and strongly encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to take additional measures to address all of the human rights concerns outlined in the Department of State's 2007 Human Rights Report."

HANSON